



# Active Listening Techniques

Active listening is a skill that requires continual practice. By being an active listener, you show your staff you are interested in what is being said, you understand how he or she feels, and you understand the meaning of the message. There are five (5) primary types of active listening:

## Type: Neutral

- **Definition:** Use non-committal language; don't agree or disagree
- **Purpose:** Convey interest; keep your staff member talking
- **Examples:** "I see." "Uh-huh." "I understand."

## Type: Exploratory

- **Definition:** Determines the who, what, where and when
- **Purpose:** Gather additional facts; help your staff members explore all parts of the situation
- **Examples:** "When did the situation begin?" "Where were you when that happened?"

## Type: Restatement

- **Definition:** Re-state all or part of the employee's last sentence or basic idea
- **Purpose:** Show you are listening and understand what is being said; encourages your staff member to continue talking; validate your understanding
- **Examples:** "If I understand correctly, you told your coworker..."; "It was your decision and your reasons were..."

## Type: Reflective

- **Definition:** Similar to restatement, but you reflect the feelings expressed
- **Purpose:** Show you understand how the person feels; helps the employee to explore the situation; validate your understanding
- **Examples:** "You feel that..."; "You think it is unfair..."; "You felt it wasn't properly addressed..."

## Type: Summarizing

- **Definition:** Summarize and restate or reflect the ideas and/or feelings
- **Purpose:** Serves as a checkpoint for further discussion; bring the situation into perspective
- **Examples:** "These are the key ideas you have stated..."; "If I understand how you feel about the overall situation..."